

Dear Chairman Pai,

This comment is in response to WC Docket Nos. 09-197, 11-42. The advent and expansion of the internet has revolutionized the way that people learn, work, and communicate on a daily basis. Access to broadband internet has democratized the availability of information for all peoples but specially has expanded educational access to impoverished Americans. It allows this section of our population the ability to learn new skills, find new jobs, and begin to get a better grasp of good financial habits. Limited access to broadband internet is a detriment to society as it builds walls between people and the ability to rapidly access and learn new skills. In addition to this, the internet has begun to largely replace telephone as the primary means of communication for many Americans. The extension of the Lifeline program to include subsidization of broadband internet reflected this change in communication modalities, and was a remarkable representation of the FCC's ability to adapt to new transformative technologies. I grew up in Flint, MI and my parents lived at or below the poverty line much of childhood, I attend a small, semi-rural primary school. I was fortunate enough that my parents were able to afford the internet when I was about 10 years old, this simple purchase that was out of our reach for such a long time completely upended my world. Instead of being limited to the books that we could afford I was suddenly exposed to this endless wealth of information that the internet contains. I quickly gained in interested in computer programing and started practicing critical thinking skills on a daily basis at home. I currently am a PhD candidate in synthetic biology at Rice University and I completely credit access to the internet with getting me to this stage. I think the Lifeline program's extension to include broadband coverage should continue and even to expand more to fully connect the American people to broadband internet. This will allow all Americans the freedoms that come with nearly unlimited access to information in the comfort of their own homes.

Best regards,

Joshua T Atkinson